



# TIDINGS

Redeemer Lutheran Church  
1545 Chain Bridge Road  
McLean, VA 22101

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## CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

From one of our Advent texts, Isaiah 40:4-5 - **“Fill the valleys; level the hills; straighten out the crooked paths and smooth off the rough spots in the road. Then the glory of the Lord will be seen by all people.”**

I know about the author, Stephen Covey, mainly because of his best-selling book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. He tells about being in New York for a meeting, and was traveling by subway back to his hotel. At one of the stops, a man with four small children got on the train and sat down next to Covey. As the train moved away from the station, the four children began running up and down the aisle, yelling and playing, and making nuisances out of themselves. One of the children grabbed a newspaper out of the hands of another passenger. Another knocked over a sack of groceries an elderly woman had sitting beside her, and cans rolled over the floor. The entire car was in chaos. Covey looked at this man sitting beside him. He assumed that he was the father of the children, but was doing nothing to control them. He was just sitting there, staring out the window, seemingly unconcerned about his children’s behavior. Covey’s first thought was that the man was a detached, passive father. He told himself that this kind of parenting isn’t going to foster a very healthy set of attitudes in the children. As they got louder and even more disruptive, Covey decided to speak up. “Excuse me, sir,” he said to the man. “Don’t you think you should do something about your children? They’re disturbing everyone on the train.” The man turned to look at Covey, then at his children. “I guess you’re right,” he said in a flat sort of tone. “I guess I don’t know what to do. You see, we just came from the hospital. My wife, their mother, died about an hour ago. I guess we’re in shock.”

At that moment, Covey says, everything looked different. Everything he had observed and concluded about the man and his children, every judgment he had made, had to be looked at differently in light of this startling, new revelation.

The bold claim that our Christian faith makes is that God gives us a new way to look at life. In Jesus, we can see that the rough places that stand between us and God have been smoothed out. We come to see what it means to have Christ share in our life. Faith lets us see God at work, comforting, forgiving, and giving us a hope that no one can take away.

John the Baptist, a figure that looms large every Advent, calls this new way of seeing God at work repentance - living differently tomorrow from the way we are living today. Turning toward the God who has broken every barrier down. Living and acting as if Jesus were present - not absent - from our lives. Maybe this year our Christmas shopping list can include:

Giving someone a reason to hope.  
Giving someone the gift of believing in them.  
Giving someone forgiveness.

Blessings to each of you this Advent, Christmas season!

Pastor Paul

# INTRODUCING PASTOR SANDY KESSINGER



To Our Redeemer Family,

It is with great joy that the Call Committee and the Congregation Council share with you the important news that the searching and discernment phase of the call process has concluded. We are introducing to you the person whom we recommend calling to be the next pastor of Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Pastor Sandy Kessinger. We could not be more confident that God has led us to this moment and decision.

The Call Committee will conduct a Q&A session at 10:45 on December 4<sup>th</sup>. On the afternoon of December 10<sup>th</sup>, you will have the opportunity to meet Pastor Kessinger at an Open House event from 2:00 - 4:30. She will lead the worship services on Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> and afterwards, the congregation will vote on the call. Your presence during worship and especially voting on the call will say so much and is so important, for she will, if called, be *our* pastor. All this comes at a wonderful time: Advent! And how appropriate it is that, as we anticipate and celebrate the birth of our Lord, we invite a new pastor into our faith family!

As you read through the following text, we believe you will find many of the virtues and gifts that we have discovered and, like us, you will welcome and embrace her. In the meantime, we ask your prayers for our congregation, for Pastor Kessinger, and in gratitude to God.

Yours in Christ,

The Call Committee:

Eric Sivertsen (Chair)  
Paula Green  
Marti Hople

Steven Kutscher  
Terri Markwart  
Marie Moser

Alan Rogers  
Doug Ubben  
Kirk Betts (Pres. Cong. Council)

Congregational Council:

Kirk Betts  
John Dietrich  
C. Dean Graves  
George Hall  
Karin Kutscher

Luther Markwart  
Michael Philpy  
Carol Pribulka  
Doug Scheffler (Secy.)

Bill Swarm  
Mark Vrooman  
Heather Waldon  
Hayley Wenk

## WHO IS PASTOR SANDY KESSINGER – IN HER OWN WORDS

### *Early Years and Spiritual Calling*



I grew up in a faith-based home in the suburbs of Chicago. My religious background is with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. My family worshipped regularly in a congregation that also had a parochial school. I attended that school for nine years (kindergarten through eighth grade), and I received a strong education that was centered on the study of Scripture. When it came time for me to contemplate career choices, my first thought was to become a deaconess in the Missouri Synod Church but I also wanted to teach. I resisted that sense of call and decided to become a math teacher. I chose to complete my undergraduate work at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois.

During my college years I moved my church membership from the Missouri Synod to the Lutheran Church in America. I completed my studies, married, and we moved to Pittsburgh where I taught high school math for six years in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. After taking time off to raise my children, I accepted a position to teach computer science at a local college. At the same time, my call to ministry persisted so I became more involved in my congregation, and I studied to become a lay worship leader. I felt strongly that I was again receiving the external affirmation to pursue ordained ministry while my internal sense of call was still very real and present. That internal sense of call included my earliest remembrances that God was central in my life, the church has always been my sanctuary, and I wanted to dedicate my life - within human limitations - to servant leadership. I finally decided, at the age of 36, to go through the candidacy process. It took six years to complete my studies as I worked full-time for three of those years at the college.

### *Family*

My father resides in Rochester, New York, and I have an older brother who lives in San Francisco, California. I have been blessed with the gift of twin daughters, Sara and Shelley (Sara is the oldest by three minutes), who were born on Easter Sunday and my son, Scott, just missed being born on Labor Day (three years after Sara and Shelley were born). Sara is married to Garth and they have a daughter, Hannah. Shelley is married to James, and they also happen to be members of Redeemer. Both Sara and Shelley live in Alexandria, Virginia. Scott lives in Brooklyn, New York. All three of my children work in the software industry.



### *Interests*

My favorite activity outside of the church is to spend quality time with my children and their extended families. I like to connect with them in unique ways and appreciate the level of conversations we can have on different topics. About ten years ago I took up running again, and I was able to run 2,010 miles in 2010! I love to read a variety of books for study and entertainment. I enjoy sharing time with friends, especially over a meal. I enjoy watching most sports, and I have become a Steelers fan. There really is no other option when you live in Pittsburgh! I spent my early years bowling almost every week, and my college years were spent perfecting my pool playing.

## *Education and Vocational Calls*



As noted earlier, I attended Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. My double major was in mathematics and computer science with a double minor in philosophy and psychology. I also went to Duquesne University and received a Master in Counseling Education. My second post-graduate degree is from Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, where I received a Master of Divinity.

**My first call was to Emanuel’s Lutheran Church on the north side of Pittsburgh. It was a small membership congregation that eventually grew into a mid-sized church. Under my leadership we reached out into the community in two significant ways. We started an afterschool program for elementary school children, and we made our building available to a local not-for-profit organization that offered financial assistance to individuals. Our youth program grew, and we were able to offer them opportunities to attend the ELCA National Youth Gathering and servant events. As pas-**

tor I believe my call is also to the wider church so I also served by being a member of the Outreach Committee and the Synod Council.

After 8½ years in the parish, I was invited into the call process that led me to become an Assistant to the Bishop. My present responsibilities include the oversight of approximately 100 congregations. My role with these congregations is to foster good working relationships with the pastors and lay leaders, offer assistance during times of conflict, be present for times of celebration, and facilitate the call process. I also work with our synod committees in such areas as advocacy, global mission, lay training, candidacy, disaster response, and ecumenism. Our synod became more extensively involved in disaster response after several of our communities were flooded by Hurricane Ivan. Since that time I have coordinated local efforts for recovery, and we have sent hundreds of people from our synod to the Gulf Coast area to help people rebuild their homes.



After 8½ years at the synod office, I have been invited into the call process at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer. From the time that I first sat down with the call committee, we related well with each other and connected on a spiritual level. I am excited about the possibility of serving this congregation because the things that you seek in a pastor are the things that I am passionate about - a quality worship experience that is centered on sound preaching, ways to make Scripture alive for people of all ages, and learning ways to live out our faith at home and in our work places. Administratively I would enjoy using my gifts to work alongside the leaders of this church to take care of the members while reaching out into the community for the sake of the gospel message. Pastorally I would care for you as the people of God who also have a call to serve.

## *Personal Goals*

In the affirmation of baptism rite, there are five core statements that describe ways to live in the covenant God made with us: To live among God's people, to hear His Word and share in His supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people following the example of Jesus Christ, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth. These five statements guide how I approach my ministry and my personal life.

**Yours in Christ,**

**Pastor Sandy Kessinger**



## EIGHT DESIRED PASTORAL THEMES FROM REDEEMER'S LISTENING SESSIONS IN MARCH 2011 (THE 4C'S)

- Strong spiritually and an outstanding preacher with the ability to create a truly superior worship and music experience
- Warm, genuine, friendly, enthusiastic person with excellent interpersonal skills who can connect and communicate with the congregation, both individually and collectively
- Knows the names, lives, and talents of the congregation; strong leader who can genuinely connect with and care for all ages within the congregation - ability to inspire, motivate and move the congregation forward **as "one" community**
- Sensitive pastoral skills to recognize the divergent views of the congregation, uniqueness of Redeemer, and the tremendous spiritual and lay potential
- **Ability to translate the Bible into today's world (locally, nationally, and internationally) and continually** challenge the congregation with inspiring messages
- Ability to enhance or create children and youth programs to attract, motivate, and retain children and youth at Redeemer and throughout their lives
- Primary pastoral and management experience building an effective organizational structure leveraging and empowering the talents of the staff and the volunteer lay community
- Pastoral, spiritual, and personal skills to appropriately handle sensitive issues such as stewardship and money and the ELCA statement on sexuality

### CALL COMMITTEE REFLECTIONS

**"Our prayers led us to Pastor Kessinger; I believe her prayers, at the time unspoken, were also answered** for a call to minister to and with us. Over the period we have come to know her, she has revealed the essential characteristics - and more than we actually identified as being essential.

What are those characteristics? Faithful. Scripturally sound. Thoughtful. Experienced. Honest. Warm. Intelligent. Confident. Decisive. Leader. Listener. Clarifier. Inviting. Personal. Courageous. Enthusiastic. Loving. Family oriented. Grace. Precision. Committed. Steward. Self-**aware. Firm.**"

**"Loves every age group; connects to people; ACTIVE LISTENER; effective leadership style** - creative and innovative; preaching, sermon and Bible study were impressive at Redeemer; strong people and caring skills."

**"Open to God and His challenges and demands; all of my experiences with her have been accompanied by** a sense of calm and peace; has a strong sense of self-weaknesses and strengths; understands her audience and seeks to move it where God is calling her to go."

**“She is a woman who has quiet confidence in herself. I believe people will be able to relate to her in a number of ways - someone who was married, divorced, coping with tremendous loss, mother, grandmother, and a single woman. She has demonstrated the ability to connect to people in a genuine way - on a personal level, in small group settings, and within the larger context of a congregation. Connecting to people is something that she does enthusiastically and naturally; it is not something that has to be forced. She has a solid background in counseling. I believe she will gain people’s trust and ministry support by practicing what she preaches.”**

**“As we neared the end of the (first) meeting, I could see my family sharing meals with this woman. I could see her ministering to the sick in our congregation. I could see her inspiring families to get involved. I could see her talking with a teen who was contemplating hurting him or herself. I could see her being many things to the people of Redeemer.**

**...the way I feel when I am around her surpasses my understanding. I would want her in my life during good times, but more importantly, in the not so good times. She will bring comfort to those who hurt.**

Beyond the emotional side, I love her organizational skills, her back bone, I do not believe she will be a push-over; she is firm when she needs to be. She wants to be involved not only in Redeemer, but also in McLean and the greater community we serve.....no agenda, just carrying out the work of the Lord, and I’m good with that and feel blessed to have found her.”

**“During all our meetings and discussions, she always projects a sense of true sincerity and genuine love; love of her call to serve God and deliver His message to all. She didn’t have the opportunity to deliver her children’s sermon when we visited her in PA to hear her preach, but I got the feeling that her sermon would have been very effective in showing the children the meaning and intent of the Bible verse. She reminds us to always have a ‘listening heart’.”**

**“Some of us attended Barb Hahne’s funeral and had the experience of listening to three messages from our current and former pastors (Paul, Bob, and George). Each message was different, some more powerful, some more thoughtful. As I listened to each, I imagined Pastor Kessinger delivering her sermon. I know she would have taken it upon herself to know Barb and the whole family well. She would have delivered a wonderful message that was spiritual and also very personal to Barb.”**

**“I get a sense of confidence and authority from Pastor Kessinger that is clearly rooted in her spirituality, education and life experience. She is a mature, energetic, and organized individual; characteristics that will serve her well in her executive role at Redeemer.**

In our conversations with Pastor Kessinger, I was struck by the fresh outlook and approach that she has with respect to our mission statement, **‘Sharing Christ’s love with the greatest number of people’**. Lastly, Pastor Kessinger reminds me via our interactions with her that all glory, power, and honor are His, and we are humbled, yet empowered to proceed to allow Him to act through us. It is on this point that I believe we stand as a committee to recommend to call Pastor Kessinger to Redeemer.”

**“I am eager to get Pastor Kessinger with us so we can get to work on making Redeemer all we can be to ourselves, the community, and God. I am genuinely excited!”**

## SAVE THE DATES!

In preparation for the upcoming congregational vote, the Call Committee has arranged several chances for you to learn more about Pastor Kessinger. We hope you will take advantage of these opportunities. This is an important time for Redeemer, and your participation is vital!

Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 10:45 - Q&A Session, Fellowship Hall

Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2:00-4:30 - Pastor Kessinger Open House, Crossroads

Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> - Pastor Kessinger to lead all three services

Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> - Congregational Meeting and Vote. A special congregational meeting will take place to vote on extending the call to Pastor Kessinger.

## A Modest Proposal

**This is a very special Advent season for Redeemer Lutheran Church, perhaps the most important we've had in years.** On December 11<sup>th</sup>, less than two weeks away, after an intensive and prayerful search by our Call Committee, we will welcome Pastor Sandy Kessinger to our pulpit. We will be asking her to join us on our faith journey, to relocate, and to become a part of our faith family.

**Wouldn't it be an amazing statement of welcome if four things happened: 1) we had a large turnout on Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, to welcome, meet and talk with her personally; 2) we filled the nave for every worship on Sunday, December 11; 3) our offerings overflowed the offering plates, eliminating our \$135,000 deficit and adding new funds for ministries; and 4) hundreds attended the special congregational meeting to vote on the call to Pastor Kessinger--all of them offered as an expression of gratitude for a God that has brought us to this moment together! Wouldn't that be an awesome expression of love, welcome, gratitude, and joy!?**

## Congregation Council Report for November

The Council met on November 7, 2011 and took the following actions:

- By unanimous vote, endorsed the report of the Call Committee and recommended that the congregation call Pastor Sandy Kessinger as our next pastor.
- By unanimous vote, directed the President to convene a special congregational meeting on December 11 to vote to call Pastor Kessinger.
- Received, reviewed, and referred the Pre-School's 2012-13 Fiscal Year budget. By unanimous vote, this was referred to Finance and Administration Committee to incorporate it into the budget.
- Unanimously endorsed the Worship and Music Committee's proposal for "Music at Redeemer," a program that would produce 4 to 6 music events per year to expand our presence in McLean. Events for this year include the organ dedication, a concert program in conjunction with the live nativity on December 16, other concerns in 2012, including an opera performance.
- Unanimously approved the use of youth program funds to pay the registration fee (\$315) for every person from Redeemer attending the 2012 National Youth Gathering in New Orleans.
- Appointed Janet Pfister to the Nominating Committee with gratitude.
- **Received the Treasurer's report through October 31 showing actual receipts of \$596,322, actual expenditures of \$731,866, and a deficit of \$135,544.** On a more positive note, giving to retire the construction debt continues.
- The entire Council agreed to serve as the Stewardship Team for 2011.
- Received reports from Pastor Paul on ministry matters and Ken Brown on administrative matters.

## Expressing Gratitude - A Lesson from Tipping

In my capacity as President, I have to share with you that our offerings given to operate our church fall way short of what we are spending. By the numbers, as of October 31, we have contributed \$596,322; as of that same date, **we've spent \$731,866. This means that we have spent \$135,544 MORE than we've given.** I suppose in a government town, spending only 20% more than we receive doesn't sound so bad. The thing is, we borrow money internally to meet expenses with the hope that all of us will contribute during November and December to make ends meet. I suppose the good news is that this is a pattern of this congregation, and we come close each year to catching up—sometimes even giving a little more—after intensive campaigns by our pastors and stewardship teams.

From an operating stewardship perspective, the pastors, council and staff have worked to manage our gifts and resources well. But the truth is, when average giving is \$49,000/month, and average spending is \$63,000/month, it is not sustainable. **We need—and when I say ‘We’ I am not talking about the council, pastors, or staff, or stewardship committee, I’m talking about us, the family, need to do better.**

I was reminded recently when others at the table began debating how much to tip a waiter. Percentages from 15 to 22% were proposed with insistence to recognize good service and food. **15-22%! Gosh, I thought, we don't do that for God! In a book entitled “Giving”, the author writes, “Show me your calendar and bank statement and I'll show you what you value and where your heart is.” So, how do we express gratitude to God for his good service to us? .** In the four years that Debbie and I have been worshipping here, we have come to appreciate the gifts, talents, and resources that all of us bring to the communion table. As part of our marriage commitment, we tithe, giving 10% of my monthly income to this church. We tithe because we are so grateful for the abundance that God has allowed us to experience—healing when we've hurt, hope when times seem hopeless, people who become the face of Christ for the ways they have reached out to us and when we've reached out to them, love for one another that is beyond our imagination, children and grandchildren, deep friendships, careers that we enjoy and allow us to live out our faith faithfully, good health, and perhaps as much as anything, the heart to experience miracles. I share this not to hold it out as an example, but to tell we've never been happier in our lives. **Virtually everyone who tithes will tell you the same thing.**

I am not one to insist that everyone do what we do. Exploring your faith and how you live it out is a lifetime journey. **Many remind me, “You know, Kirk, people give time as well as money.” I certainly know that, so let's agree to make this about something more important than money—your heart and your relationship with Christ. Let's put a percentage to the time we focus on God. To keep it simple, let's say 10%. So let's start with 6 minutes—that's 10% of every hour—to devote to acknowledging a gift that you've gotten from God—it could be as simple as oxygen or food—with a prayer of gratitude. (I'll bet that's less time than we spend on our computers, tablets, and smart phones reading and responding to email or text messages.) Offer a prayer of thanks and ask God to bless every meal—not just at special gatherings! Worship and then share a greeting with someone you don't know in the Crossroads, maybe becoming the face of Christ for that person. Read *anything* that helps you explore your faith. Reach out in an extraordinary way--like volunteering in a soup kitchen and the hungry. Invite someone who is alone to coffee or a meal. You get the point, from your heart, share generously in all that you do as God has done for you. It will change the world around you, change you, and delight God!**

**It's Advent. Advent is defined as “the coming of something important.” Jesus changed the world, not because of his power, but because of the power of the message he shared and by the way he shared it—doing all of things I've suggested above. His message is as true today as it was then. Think gratefully and act generously, and make this Advent about what is really important.**

Dear friends-

Thank you so much for your generosity in supporting the McLean Community Stop Hunger Event! 200,000 meals will provide lunch for three years to a school with 200 students. What a difference this will make in the lives of those children, their families and community.

Faith plays a big part in our planning for these events. We do our best to prepare by encouraging people to sign up online and to make donations early before we have to make a firm commitment of size to the SHN organization. But, as you well know, many put off taking action until the event is very close. We await miracles as the event unfolds.

Friday night, when the trucks arrived with 15 tons of ingredients and supplies, we wondered who will unload all of this and make it ready for the event. But soon we had a group from Redeemer, Temple Rodef Shalom and some community families who had made travel plans for Saturday, but still wanted to help. In under two hours, the truck was unloaded, the tables set up, and the boxes were labeled and taped.

So on Saturday, we stood by the door at 8:25, a batch of hairnets in hand, waiting and wondering if enough people would volunteer for this, our biggest event. Slowly some young people trickled in, then a steady stream, until Parents Hall was filled to the brim with people from every part of the community working to package meals for children around the world. This happy scene unfolded again at 11 and again at 1:30. Children came up to me to say this was their third event and they were still excited. Some of our volunteer families worked two shifts because the young people didn't want to leave.

Though precise numbers still elude us, we estimate we had over 1000 enthusiastic volunteers on Saturday. We met our goal of packaging 200,000 meals.

We raised over \$12,500 from members of our congregation for this event. We had donations from over 120 donors as well as the Redeemer Preschool Board and the children of Redeemer Renaissance.

We believe this event has meaning beyond feeding the hungry children of the world. The McLean community clearly wants to be of service, especially when the event has the "hands on" component that this has. The fact that it is inter-generational and interfaith send important messages about community to those who attend. This event gives young people from the schools opportunities for leadership, and the lessons learned will be part of them as they go to college and beyond. We have a student at Longfellow Middle School who is already organizing a spring fundraiser to help fund the next event. It is wonderful to have an event that captures and engages our youth and families in a meaningful way.

We are grateful to many for these successes, but a few volunteers went far and above:

- Matthew Martz who provided the music
- Michael Philpy who worked all day helping with the heavy bags of rice and soy
- Rob Wenk who made sure we had everything to keep running smoothly
- Eric Sivertsen who kept track of the number of meals packaged so we could track our progress and celebrate each 1000 packed
- John Roberts and Norm Knudsen for their work within the congregation and their technical help
- Terri Markwart and Lisa Richter for publicizing the event in the McLean elementary schools
- ◆ Bonnie Steuart and the teller committee for counting piles of coins and dollars and keeping such great records

We are also grateful for the foresight of Ron Kutscher and the building committee for recognizing 15 years ago that we needed a space that could be open for community events and planned for and built Parents Hall. So many of our volunteers commented on what a great space we have!

We continue to ask for your prayers as the Stop Hunger Now organization opens a warehouse in Ashburn this month. They also are operating on faith, that they will be able to package one million meals a year in Northern Virginia. We know already that there will be two events inspired by our successful events: at the end of January a group of elementary school in Great Falls will hold an event and in March there will be one in Centerville organized by Bob's son.

And, of course we are looking ahead to another, even bigger event in McLean next fall. We are counting on our partnership with Redeemer to continue its support of this important mission.

Thank you! Thank you!

In Christ,

Bob Hahne  
Lucinda Romberg



## Partner for Surgery

Partner for Surgery is continuing Barbara Hahne's legacy of making gift bags for children undergoing surgery in Guatemala. If you would like to contribute items, there is a box in the entrance of Redeemer's Education Wing. Needed especially now are: coloring books, sippy cups, washcloths, notebooks and small toys (matchbox cars, small items for girls). We will be sending more bags down after the first of the year.

## Gifts of Hope

During the Advent season our congregation will again be participating in Gift of Hope, the alternative gift-giving program of the synod. Gifts of Hope is an alternative giving program that raises money to help people in need in our community and around the world. Every cent received goes directly to the beneficiaries.

What is alternative giving? Traditional gift giving involves buying an item and giving it to a relative or friend. Alternative giving differs in that it involves making a contribution to an organization or beneficiary of your choice and presenting Christmas gift cards describing your chosen gift to your relatives or friends. While you select your gift for each purchase, the actual gift will be delivered to the organization or beneficiary chosen by you. The Gifts of Hope table will be in the Crossroads coffee area before and after services on December 4, 11, and 18. Visit it to make your purchases or have your questions answered.



## Redeemer Book Group

Greeting to Book Lovers from your long lost Book Group Coordinator. I hope to get us back on track in the upcoming year. Although we love to meet in our homes for the majority of the time, it is sometimes easier for first time members to come to the church. Please join us at the church on January 22, 2012, at 2 p.m. I think the 22nd is the best Sunday for us to meet, as the previous week-end is right before MLK day and the week after is the four day week-end for Fairfax County Public Schools. At the group, we will review the book that we had hoped to review in the fall, The Palace Walk, by Nobel Prize Winner Naguib Mahfouz.

Palace Walk is the first installment of Mahfouz's Cairo Trilogy. It begins in Cairo during 1917, during World War I, and ends in 1919, the year of the nationalist revolution. The book's Arabic title translates literally into 'between two palaces' - a phrase which highlights the cultural and political transition Egypt experienced at this time, developments brought into focus by the lives of the el-Gawad family.

At the January meeting, we will also set up the book list for the following months and will also schedule the dates for the upcoming months. Bring your favorite new book to nominate, as well as your calendars to plan for meetings in February, March, April, and May. Please contact Claire Dutrow with questions.

## Christmas Centerpieces



The Christmas roast can be dry and the potatoes too salty, but the table will look wonderful with a beautiful holiday centerpiece - guaranteed. Come create a beautiful centerpiece with Redeemer Women on Sunday, December 18 at 11am. Phyllis Mallard will demonstrate floral design and help each of us create a beautiful centerpiece. The cost is \$35 and you are encouraged to bring your own bowl. Email Ann Lawrence if you have questions, [lawrenceann@cox.net](mailto:lawrenceann@cox.net). Bring your friends and family members - this is a fun event!! or container. If you do not have a container, come anyway, we will have something for you. Because we must buy flowers, you must pre-register for **this event. Please mark your check "Christmas Centerpieces" and send it to the office or place it in the offering plate.** Registration ends Dec 11.



## Living Nativity Sounds of the Season Christmas Concert

Please come to Redeemer's Christmas Living Nativity and Sounds of the Season Christmas Concert. Invite your friends and neighbors, especially children to experience the wonder of God's greatest gift!

Friday 12/16

Visit the Living Nativity from 6 to 8pm: Experience the wonder of the manger, especially the live animals!  
Warm up with Hot Chocolate and other treats  
Shop at Gifts of Hope and the Sunday School Bake Sale  
Proceeds will be donated to local charities and Lutheran World Relief

Relax and Enjoy the Sounds of the Season Concert at 7:30 in the Church  
The Sounds of the Season Concert will include performances by:  
Bell Choir, Praise Team, Traditional Choir, Youth Choir, and the Student Symphonic Orchestra led by Matthew Martz.

Volunteers are needed to:  
set-up, serve hot chocolate, play the parts of Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, and Wisemen, direct parking, usher, bake for the bake sale and clean up.  
To Volunteer please contact Kim Wenk at 703.356.6537 or kbwenk@verizon.net

Kids in Church Sundays  
Mark your Calendars 12/25 and 1/1



Attention all Sunday School Families: please plan to have your children attend worship with you on 12/25 and 1/1. There will no be Sunday School Classes held on these Sundays due to the holidays. We hope that the students will enjoy attending church and worshipping with their families on these Sundays.

Sunday School Students and Families - You are invited, Please come:

Saturday 12/10 from 2 to 4:30pm Come to the Cookie Reception to meet and get to know Pastor Kessinger

Friday 12/16 Living Nativity 6-8pm and Sounds of the Season Christmas Concert at 7:30. This is a wonderful event for the entire family and a great chance to invite friends and neighbors to experience the wonder and joy of Christmas.

**WE NEED BAKERS!**

We will be holding a Sunday School Bake Sale at the Christmas Festival as the Sunday School outreach project for this season. We are asking the students and their families to bake cookies or favorite treats of the season and bring them to Redeemer on Friday, 12/16 by 5pm. We will be distributing holiday printed Ziploc bags at Sunday School for your baked goods for the sale. We will also need parent/child volunteers to set-up and run the sale. Set-up from 5 to 6pm and Work the sale from 6pm to 9pm, or earlier if we sell out! If you are interested in volunteering on 12/10, or have any questions, please reply to kbwenk@verizon.net.

## Faith and Life Forum

This month we will have three forum sessions, followed by a two-weekend break for Christmas and New Year's. We are trying to keep thinking ahead, and would, as always, appreciate suggestions for programs you would like to see next year. Please contact one of the coordinators: Harold Hofstad, Robin Taylor, or Doug Scheffler.

### December 4 - Modern Apologetics and Christian Responses to The New Militant Atheism

You may have noticed in the last few years how many popular books have been written, many of them by prominent scientists such as Richard Dawkins and Stephen Gould, decrying the religion as a wholly negative influence or phenomenon. These books, along with public lectures and debates and media interviews which feature an evangelistic promotion of atheism as the rational and reasonable alternative have been proliferating. Christian Richter has been following some of these authors as well as investigating some of the Christian responses to the phenomenon by authors such as Rev. Tim Keller, who made the New York Times best seller list with his book, *Reasons for God*. Christian will share the insight he has gained in this area, for this session concentrating on the work of Keller, including a video presentation. It should be an interesting and thought-provoking discussion. Bring your concerns and perspectives on the defense of the faith in the modern world.

### December 11 - An Exploration of Today's Lessons

Doug Scheffler will lead a discussion of the day's biblical texts for Advent.

### December 18 - Way to Give!

What defines a church and, in particular, Redeemer Lutheran Church? What is the soul—the heart--of our congregation? What sort of face do we present to the community at large with our giving? **What do we do to “share God’s love with the greatest number of people”?** Are we the face of Jesus—loving, generous, welcoming, grace-filled? Studies show that people like to be a part of something generous and greater than they are as individuals. Kirk Betts, President of our congregation council, will engage us in a discussion about who we are, who we aspire to be, and what we would like others to discover and experience when they enter Redeemer Lutheran Church. **We’ll explore some ideas about the ways we may give as expressions of our faith.** Kirk recently challenged us to devote a greater percentage of our time, ourselves, and our resources in response to God’s love. (See article in this Tidings.) Jesus asked the question, **“Who do you say I am?”** As we look at budgets, stewardship, engagement in ministries, our church, and how we respond to God’s gifts to us, we’ll ask a slightly different question, **“What do my actions say I am?”**

### December 25 - No Forum - Christmas Day





## Redeemer Junior High Youth Group: Come and SHARE the Season!

Parents and Students, mark your calendars for December 4! Redeemer's Junior High Youth Group is hosting a Christmas service project in support of SHARE of McLean.

They will be decorating a Christmas tree (placed in the Keilor Wing) with gift tags, seeking donations of toiletries and grooming items. For each donation made, the gift tag will be replaced with an ornament! It's our goal to have 50 gift tags turn into ornaments during the Advent season!

We need our junior high kids to join us on December 4, first in the morning before and after Sunday School, then from 6-8pm that evening.  
or after Sunday School, please contact Liz Holzapfel at [woodapple1@verizon.net](mailto:woodapple1@verizon.net).

SHARE of McLean is a non-profit organization that started in the 1960s as a food co-op. McLean Baptist Church donates space for the food pantry but all "staff" are volunteers. The folks who receive assistance from SHARE come from a list provided by Fairfax County Social Services. At present there are 650 people on that list (approximately 250 family units). Everyone on the SHARE list lives in either McLean, Pimmit Hills or Great Falls, so when we support SHARE, we really do support folks who live in the neighborhoods around Redeemer.

In the morning we'll have table from which to pass out flyers and candy canes to promote our service project. In the evening kids should plan to help put up the tree, string popcorn and cranberries, and make the gift tags and ornaments. Dinner will be served (pizza, fruit, cookies, drinks) and holiday music will set the mood for a festive evening of fellowship and service. If you have questions about this project, or would like



## Drop and Shop

DROP AND SHOP babysitting clinic Saturday, December 17, from 9 am-noon. Parents of **3-8 year olds...here's your** chance to go Christmas shopping as a couple! The youth attending the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans are sponsoring this DROP and SHOP as a fundraiser for their trip. We are limiting the number of children attending to 20. Please email Roxanne Englund at [englunds@verizon.net](mailto:englunds@verizon.net) with the name and ages of your children to sign up! Suggested donation: \$30/child. Planned activities include games in the gym, make your own snack time, story time, a skit, and more!

## Suor (Sister) Angelica

**Start the New Year with a magical and musical beginning! Bel Cantanti Opera Company will present Puccini's one-act opera, *Suor (Sister) Angelica*, at Redeemer on Friday, January 6, 2012 at 7:30 pm. Tickets cost \$30.00 and can be purchased online at [belcantanti.com](http://belcantanti.com) or phone 301-266-7546. Bel Cantanti is an opera company within the DC metropolitan area devoted to giving magnificent performances and providing a venue for both seasoned and aspiring musicians. Many of whom have gone on to sing at some of the world's major opera houses such as the Paris Opera, Washington National Opera, San Francisco Opera and the Metropolitan opera. Bel Cantanti makes the special magic of opera happen—and right here at Redeemer! Don't miss this great opportunity to enjoy opera "at home" at a very reasonable price. See Matt Osifchin or Barbara Donne for more information and to order tickets.**



### *Deck the Halls this Christmas at Redeemer*

Beautiful poinsettias and holiday greens will fill the Crossroads and Nave once again this Christmas season. Help deck Redeemer's halls by donating in honor or in memory of someone you remember at Christmastime. The suggested donation is \$15 per honoraria or memorial. You can contribute by putting your donation and the form below in the weekly offering plate or mailing it in to the church office by Sunday, Dec. 18.

The elves will be decorating on Thursday and Friday December 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>. Enthusiasm and a desire to share in the fun is all that is required to participate. Please contact the *chief flower elf* Phyllis Peter-Mallard ([ppetermallard@yahoo.com](mailto:ppetermallard@yahoo.com)) if you can lend a hand any time during these two days!

This year at Christmas beautiful poinsettias and holiday greens will fill the Crossroads and Nave. Help deck Redeemer's halls by donating in honor or in memory of someone you remember at Christmastime. The suggested donation is \$15 per honoraria or memorial. Please complete the form below designating the name/purpose of your honoraria or memorial and attach your check. Either mail in the form with your check, leave it in the church office, or place it in the offering plate by Sunday, Dec. 18.

#### **Holiday Decoration Donation Form**

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

In thanksgiving for \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ Envelope # \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_



# December Birthdays

Tom Kanski	12/1	James Leimkuhler	12/15	Robert Hahne	12/25
Luther Markwart	12/1	Natalie Sather	12/15	Holly Lind	12/25
Julia Schimpff	12/1	Douglas Scheffler	12/15	Timothy Moll	12/25
Gordon Thomas	12/1	Sarah Stair	12/15	Matthew Kratz	12/26
Alexander Devlin	12/3	Holley Miller	12/16	Timothy Stoessel	12/26
Ellen Kennedy	12/3	Patricia Mogannam	12/17	Lon Augustenborg	12/27
Elizabeth Van Metre	12/3	Henry Bourgin	12/18	Joyce Clarke	12/27
Marie Vance	12/3	Jacob Daly	12/18	Matt Osifchin	12/27
Kristina Bettner	12/4	Joseph Horsfield	12/18	Andrea Brown	12/28
Marie Born	12/5	Rennie Martin	12/18	Donald Goff	12/28
Laura DeGrafft	12/5	Martha Hopler	12/19	<b>Lori O'Brien</b>	12/28
Rebecca Owen	12/5	WooJin Jeon	12/19	Rebecca Perrin	12/28
Amy Balkema	12/6	Rowan Klanderan	12/19	Erin Van Scoyoc	12/28
Ann Lawrence	12/6	Robert Linthicum	12/19	Alexander Dempsey	12/29
Joan Engelsgaard	12/7	Mark Mykityshyn	12/19	Hamilton Loving	12/29
Gretchen Gniffke	12/7	Woodrith Blazek	12/20	Marie Moser	12/29
Lewis Miller	12/7	Casey Kight	12/20	Israel Toviho	12/29
Annika Richardson	12/7	Luke Russo	12/20	Shawna Tunnell	12/29
Erik Richardson	12/7	Katie White	12/20	Addie Brown	12/30
Matthew Shaheen	12/7	Jeffrey Hahne	12/21	John Dietrich	12/30
Richard Lee	12/8	Olivia Huston	12/21	McKenna Klontz	12/30
Geraldine Swarm	12/8	Joel Ratliff	12/21	<b>Samantha O'Brien</b>	12/30
Joe Goldfrank	12/9	Juergen Tooren	12/21	Clinton Pfister	12/30
Mia Sande	12/9	Kirsten Leonard	12/22	Katherine Waldron	12/30
Karen Sather	12/11	Roger Dahlin	12/23	Lila Bakke	12/31
Jesse Schellenger	12/11	Marcia Doherty	12/23	Delaney Balkema	12/31
Justin Etkin	12/12	Peter Kratz	12/23	Megan DeGrafft	12/31
Kirk Odegard	12/12	Alexis Lindauer	12/23	Marie Morris	12/31
Paula Green	12/13	Anna Ross	12/23	Peter Page	12/31
Raymond Jacobsen	12/14	Mark Weischedel	12/23	Janet Pfister	12/31
Lauren Thronson	12/14	Laura Broderdorf	12/24	Elizabeth Reed	12/31
Zachary Graves	12/15	Kendrick Brown	12/25	Philip Schoepfle	12/31
Michael Honigberg	12/15	Megan Butler	12/25		



# December Calendar

Thu	12/01	6:30p 7:00p 7:45p 8:00p	Madison of McLean HOA Bell Choir Traditional Choir <b>Men's basketball</b>	FH MSA MSB PH	6:30p 7:00p 7:15p	Trinity School Athletics Finance and Administration Boy Scout Troop 1916	PH LI FH		
Fri	12/02	7:30p	Praise Team Rehearsal	MSA	Wed	12/14	6:30p 7:15p	Oakcrest Basketball 4-H	PH MSA
Sat	12/03	9:00a 9:00a	Badminton Boy Scout Plumbing Badge	PH MSA	Thu	12/15	2:30p 6:30p 6:45p 7:00p 7:45p 8:00p	Pictorial Directory Photos Piano Recital McLean Youth Basketball Bell Choir Traditional Choir <b>Men's Basketball</b>	CL NA PH MSA MSB PH
Sun	12/04	8:30a 9:45a 9:45a 10:45a 11:00a 12:00p 3:30p 4:30p 4:50p 6:00p	Traditional Worship Contemporary Worship Faith and Life Forum Pastor Kessinger Q&A Traditional Worship New Members Received New Members Reception Brownie Troop Tiger Den Meeting SSOF Junior High Gathering	NA NA FH FH NA CF CL CF FH	Fri	12/16	6:00p 7:30p	Living Nativity Sounds of the Seasons	RLC NA
Mon	12/05	7:00p 7:00p 7:30p	AA Banner Team Aerobics	MSA FH PH	Sat	12/17	8:00p 8:00a 9:00a	Boy Scout Renovation Drop and Shop Badminton	RLC FH PH
Tue	12/06	12:00p 6:30p 7:00p	Rotary Trinity School Athletics Boy Scout Troop 1916	PH PH FH	Sun	12/18	8:30a 9:45a 9:45a 11:00a 11:00a 3:30p 4:50p	Traditional Worship Contemporary Worship Faith and Life Forum Traditional Worship <b>Women's Greens Event</b> Brownie Troop 6911 SSOF	NA NA FH NA PH CL CF
Wed	12/07	9:30a 6:30p 7:30p	Quilting Group Oakcrest Basketball Trinity Athletics	FH PH PH	Mon	12/19	2:00p 7:00p 7:30p 7:30p	Women of the ELCA Tea AA Aerobics McLean Swim and Tennis	LI MSA PH CR
Thu	12/08	6:45p 7:00p 7:45p 8:00p	McLean Youth Basketball Bell Choir Traditional Choir <b>Men's Basketball</b>	PH MSA MSB PH	Tue	12/20	12:00 6:30p 7:00p	Rotary Trinity School Athletics Boy Scout Troop 1916	FH PH FH
Fri	12/09	6:30p	Old Firehouse Teen Basketball	PH	Wed	12/21	9:30a	Quilting	FH
Sat	12/10	9:00a 2:00p	Badminton Pastor Kessinger Reception	PH CF	Thurs	12/22	6:45p 7:00p 7:45p 8:00p	McLean Youth Basketball Bell Choir Traditional Choir <b>Men's Basketball</b>	PH MSA MSB PH
Sun	12/11		<i>Pastor Kessinger Preaching</i>		Sat	12/24	4:00p 6:00p 8:00p 10:00p	Family Worship Candlelight Worship Candlelight Worship Candlelight Worship	NA NA NA NA
		8:30a 9:45a 9:45a 11:00a 12:00p 3:30p 1:00p 3:00p 3:30p 4:50p	Traditional Worship Contemporary Worship Faith and Life Forum Traditional Worship Congregational Vote Safe Community Coalition Webelos Meeting Bear Den Meeting Brownie Troop 6911 SSOF	NA NA FH NA PH CL CL CL CF	Sun	12/25	10:30a	Christmas Day Worship	NA
Mon	12/12	7:00p 7:30p 7:30p	AA Aerobics Congregation Council Mtg.	MSA PH CR	Mon	12/26	7:00p 7:30p	AA Aerobics	MSA PH
Tue	12/13	12:00p 6:00p	Rotary Langley Residential	FH MSA	Tue	12/27	7:00p	Stoneleigh Association	CR
					Thu	12/29	6:45p 8:00p	McLean Youth Basketball <b>Men's Basketball</b>	PH PH
					Fri	12/30	6:30p	Youth Basketball	PH